



Friend of the Court Grievances Annual Report to the Legislature Calendar Year 2005

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT
State Court Administrative Office
Friend of the Court Bureau

AUGUST 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Friend of the Court Bureau's 22nd Annual Grievance Report to the Michigan Legislature.

The Friend of the Court Bureau ("the Bureau") is part of the State Court Administrative Office. The Bureau was created by the Friend of the Court Act ("the Act"), 1982 PA 294; MCL 552.501 et seq. Among other duties, the Act requires the Bureau to collect data on the operations of county friend of the court ("FOC") offices. That includes data on all grievances filed with county FOCs, and the FOCs' responses to those grievances.

One section of the Act, MCL 552.519(3)(d), requires the Bureau to prepare an annual FOC grievance report to the Michigan Legislature. That report must summarize the grievances that were filed with FOCs the preceding year, detail how the grievances were resolved, and state the number of grievances that remained pending at the end of the year.

During the 2005 calendar year, 705 grievances were filed with county FOC offices. That represented a 31 percent decrease from 2004. For 2005, the ratio of open FOC cases to grievances figure filed was 1,175:1. The comparable ratio in 2004 was 843:1.

Grievances sometimes raise issues that the Act does not recognize as "grievable." Examples of nongrievable issues include: the substance of a court's ruling; the substance of an FOC's recommendation to a court; and an issue that must be addressed by some agency other than the FOC. The FOCs accept these grievances and respond to them, but the response may simply inform the grievant that the issue is not grievable under the Act. A grievance also occasionally raises multiple issues. The FOC then will respond separately and substantively to those issues that are grievable.

In this report, FOC responses to grievances are grouped into four categories: (1) acknowledged in full; (2) acknowledged in part; (3) denied; and (4) deemed to be nongrievable. During the past year, 30 grievances were acknowledged in full, 98 were acknowledged in part, 437 were denied, 91 were deemed nongrievable, and 18 remained pending as of December 31, 2005.

The 705 grievances that were filed with county FOC offices raised a total of 923 discrete and grievable issues. Of those 923 issues, 69 percent were complaints about some aspect of FOC office operations, while 31 percent were criticisms of an individual FOC employee's performance.

Looking only at the "office operations" category, 54 percent raised a "child support" issue, 16 percent focused on "parenting time," 2 percent involved "custody," and another 2 percent alleged "gender bias." The remaining 26 percent were classified as "other" because the issues that they raised were unique or nearly so.

In response to those grievances that county FOCs acknowledged -- either in full or in part -- the FOCs changed their office procedures in 34 instances and took personnel actions involving 30 individual employees.

ATTACHMENT TO 2005 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

The attachments that follow provide more detailed data and some Web links to additional information about the FOC grievance process. Also attached is a separate summary of grievance processing by FOC “citizen advisory committees” in the five counties that have such committees.

ATTACHMENT TO 2005 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Links to Additional Information

Grievance Report Links

SCAO Grievance Forms:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/domesticrelations/focgeneral/foc1a.pdf>

Statute Describing Grievance Process

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(qadqm1nshwju4rymkvim41eb\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-552-526](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(qadqm1nshwju4rymkvim41eb)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-552-526)

Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee supplement links

Citizen Advisory Committee Reporting Forms (can be found in Attachment C of the 2004 Grievance Report):

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

Public Act 551 of 1998 (can be found in Attachment D of the 2004 Grievance Report)

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>.

Michigan Court Rules: <http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/rules/public/default.asp>.

Public Act 210 of 2004 (can be found in Attachment F of the 2004 Grievance Report):

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2003-2004/publicact/pdf/2004-PA-0210.pdf>

Recommendation for random selection of grievances (can be found in Attachment G of the 2004 Grievance Report):

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

ATTACHMENT TO 2005 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TOTAL FILED: Number of grievances filed in each office during the reporting year of January 1 through December 31.

PENDING: Number of grievances not resolved during the reporting year.

GRIEVANCE RESPONSE:

A/F: Acknowledged in full - merit in grievance.

A/P: Acknowledged in part - merit in part of grievance.

D: Denied - no merit in grievance.

NG: Nongrievable - issue does not come under the grievance procedure.

PR: Pending response - number of grievances not resolved at the time the grievance report was submitted to the State Court Administrative Office.

Dupl: Duplicate - same party filed a grievance on the same issue.

**Same Party/
New Grievance:** Same party filed a prior grievance dealing with items not addressed in current grievance.

GRIEVANCE REGARDING:

Employee: Number of grievances filed which included an employee problem.

Office Operations: Office operations grievances may be filed regarding support, parenting time, custody, gender, or "other."

Support: Number of grievances in which support-related concerns were at issue.

Parenting Time: Number of grievances in which parenting time concerns were at issue.

Custody: Number of grievances in which custody concerns were at issue.

Gender: Number of grievances in which gender concerns were at issue.

Other: Number of grievances in which other concerns not related to support, parenting, custody, or gender were at issue.

GRIEVANCE RESULTS:

ATTACHMENT TO 2005 ANNUAL GRIEVANCE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Chg. Policy/Ops.: Change in Office Operation - grievances resulted in change in office operation.

Personnel Action: Grievances resulted in personnel or employee action.

Footnotes: A grievance may involve both an employee and office operations. Therefore, total grievances filed does not equal the total number of employee-related grievances plus the total number of office operation-related grievances.

A grievance may involve multiple concerns that require a friend of the court response. One response may address multiple concerns. Therefore, the total number of grievance concerns (e. g., custody, parenting time, support, gender, and other) will not equal the total number of grievances filed.

County	Grievance Comparisons and Totals					Grievance Responses				
	2005 Caseload	2005 Total Filed	2004 Total Filed	Percentage Change from 2004	2005 Ratio to Cases	Response over 30 days	A/F	A/P	D	NG
ALCONA/ ARENAC/ IOSCO/ OSCODA	5,305	2	4	-50%	1 : 2,653	0	0	1	1	0
ALGER	512	*FTR	0	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLEGAN	6,738	15	15	0%	1 : 449	0	2	2	8	2
ALPENA/ MONTMORENCY	3,112	5	3	67%	1 : 622	0	0	0	5	0
ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/ LEELANAU	7,885	14	8	75%	1 : 563	1	0	0	9	5
BARRY	4,363	*FTR	8	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
BAY	9,002	2	6	-67%	1 : 4,501	1	0	0	0	0
BENZIE	1,184	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 :	0	0	0	0	0
BERRIEN	18,825	1	6	-83%	1 : 18,825	0	0	0	1	0
BRANCH	3,772	0	3	-100%	0 : 3,772	0	0	0	0	0
CALHOUN	19,387	21	23	-9%	1 : 923	6	1	5	20	9
CASS	4,735	1	2	-50%	1 : 4,735	0	0	0	1	0
CHARLEVOIX	1,823	*FTR	0	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEBOYGAN/PRESEQUE ISLE	2,816	0	4	-100%	0 : 2,816	0	0	0	0	0
CHIPPEWA	2,408	1	5	-80%	1 : 2,408	0	0	0	1	0
CLARE	2,668	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
CLINTON	3,495	13	8	63%	1 : 269	0	0	0	4	9
DELTA	2,605	0	3	-100%	0 : 2,605	0	0	0	0	0
DICKINSON	1,648	5	7	-29%	1 : 330	0	0	0	5	0
EATON	8,558	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
EMMET	1,895	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
GENESEE	55,701	81	75	8%	1 : 688	5	2	12	67	0
GLADWIN	1,856	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
GOGEBIC	935	3	*FTR	0%	1 : 312	1	0	0	3	0
GRATIOT	3,116	2	2	0%	1 : 1,558	0	0	0	2	0
HILLSDALE	3,949	0	3	-100%	0 : 3,949	0	0	0	2	0
HOUGHTON/ BARAGA/ KEWEENAW	2,558	0	0	0%	0 : 2,558	0	0	0	0	0
HURON	1,940	0	3	-100%	0 : 1,940	0	0	0	0	0
INGHAM	25,911	36	50	-28%	1 : 720	0	2	0	34	0

County	Grievance Comparisons and Totals					Grievance Responses				
	2005 Caseload	2005 Total Filed	2004 Total Filed	Percentage Change from 2004	2005 Ratio to Cases	Response over 30 days	A/F	A/P	D	NG
IONIA	5,484	5	11	-55%	1 : 1,097	4	0	0	4	0
IRON	613	2	0	200%	1 : 307	0	0	1	1	0
ISABELLA	3,336	1	2	-50%	1 : 3,336	1	0	1	0	1
JACKSON	15,487	12	21	-43%	1 : 1,291	0	1	3	6	3
KALAMAZOO	21,050	17	19	-11%	1 : 1,238	4	1	0	14	3
KENT	39,074	32	62	-48%	1 : 1,221	1	1	5	19	3
LAKE	1,171	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
LAPEER	6,947	17	16	6%	1 : 409	0	1	2	11	3
LENAAWEE	8,787	6	9	-33%	1 : 1,465	0	0	2	3	1
LIVINGSTON	7,171	9	11	-18%	1 : 797	0	0	2	5	2
LUCE/MACKINAC	1,103	4	1	300%	1 : 276	4	4	0	0	0
MACOMB	38,745	43	25	72%	1 : 901	8	0	2	39	1
MANISTEE	1,790	2	7	-71%	1 : 895	0	1	1	0	0
MARQUETTE	2,982	1	2	-50%	1 : 2,982	0	0	0	1	0
MASON	1,984	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
MECOSTA	3,274	9	5	80%	1 : 364	0	0	1	8	0
MENOMINEE	1,634	*FTR	*FTR	0%	1 : 0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDLAND	4,957	3	5	-40%	1 : 1,652	1	0	0	3	0
MONROE	11,061	1	8	-88%	1 : 11,061	0	1	0	4	0
MONTCALM	6,459	1	0	100%	1 : 6,459	0	0	0	0	1
MUSKEGON	24,081	13	21	-38%	1 : 1,852	6	0	1	9	3
NEWAYGO	5,410	15	6	150%	1 : 361	7	1	6	8	0
OAKLAND	55,025	87	112	-22%	1 : 632	0	2	0	10	
OCEANA	1,632	0	2	-100%	0 : 1,632		0	0	0	0
ONTONAGON	411	0	0	0%	0 : 411	0	0	0	0	0
OSCEOLA	2,252	3	5	-40%	1 : 751	0	0	1	2	0
OTSEGO/ CRAWFORD/ KALKASKA	5,796	7	5	40%	1 : 828	2	0	5	5	1
OTTAWA	13,316	10	31	-68%	1 : 1,332	0	0	2	6	2
ROSCOMMON/OGEMAW	4,858	30	9	233%	1 : 162	14	0	12	27	3
SAGINAW	26,011	8	6	33%	1 : 3,251	0	1	0	7	0
ST. CLAIR	13,559	7	7	0%	1 : 1,937	0	0	0	7	0

County	Grievance Comparisons and Totals					Grievance Responses				
	2005 Caseload	2005 Total Filed	2004 Total Filed	Percentage Change from 2004	2005 Ratio to Cases	Response over 30 days	A/F	A/P	D	NG
ST. JOSEPH	4,872	3	2	50%	1 : 1,624	0	0	0	3	0
SANILAC	3,235	1	7	-86%	1 : 3,235	0	0	0	0	1
SCHOOLCRAFT	713	1	0	100%	1 : 713	0	0	0	0	1
SHIAWASSEE	5,889	0	*FTR	0%	0 : 5,889	0	0	0	0	0
TUSCOLA	3,902	4	5	-20%	1 : 976	0	0	2	2	1
VANBUREN	6,875	10	*FTR	0%	1 : 688	2	0	0	6	2
WASHTENAW	21,010	23	26	-12%	1 : 913	3	1	3	19	0
WAYNE	232,885	113	193	-41%	1 : 2,061	0	8	26	42	34
WEXFORD/ MISSAUKEE	4,667	3	21	-86%	1 : 1,556	0	0	0	3	0
TOTAL	828,210	705	900	-31%	1 : 1,175	71	30	98	437	91

* FTR stands for failed to report.

County	Number Pending 12/31	Multiple Grievances		Grievance Type Category						Grievance Results		
		Dupl.	Same Party New Grievance	Empl.	Supp.	Par. Time	Cust.	Gend. Based	Other	Chg. Policy /Ops.	Pers. Action	No Action
ALCONA/ ARENAC/ IOSCO/ OSCODA	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
ALGER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLEGAN	0	0	3	8	7	1	0	0	2	0	3	12
ALPENA/ MONTMORENCY	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	5
ANTRIM/ GRAND TRAVERSE/ LEELANAU	0	2	0	9	4	3	0	2	1	0	0	14
BARRY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAY	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
BENZIE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BERRIEN	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
BRANCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CALHOUN	0	6	1	19	20	2	2	1	2	1	2	25
CASS	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CHARLEVOIX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEBOYGAN/PRESEQUE ISLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHIPPEWA	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
CLARE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CLINTON	0	1	2	5	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	13
DELTA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DICKINSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
EATON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMMET	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENESEE	0	3	9	37	54	24	1	0	59	0	0	81
GLADWIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GOGEBIC	0	1	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
GRATIOT	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
HILLSDALE	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
HOUGHTON/ BARAGA/ KEWEENAW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HURON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INGHAM	0	1	0	2	29	5	0	1	4	0	0	36

County	Multiple Grievances			Grievance Type Category						Grievance Results		
	Number Pending 12/31	Dupl.	Same Party New Grievance	Empl.	Supp.	Par. Time	Cust.	Gend. Based	Other	Chg. Policy /Ops.	Pers. Action	No Action
IONIA	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
IRON	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0
ISABELLA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
JACKSON	0	0	1	4	8	2	0	0	6	0	2	11
KALAMAZOO	9	1	6	1	9	0	0	0	4	0	0	8
KENT	4	3	5	19	8	0	0	0	15	2	0	26
LAKE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAPEER	0	0	3	8	9	5	1	2	1	0	2	15
LENAWEE	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	1	4	1	0	5
LIVINGSTON	0	0	0	9	6	3	1	0	0	0	1	8
LUCE/MACKINAC	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MACOMB	0	2	1	26	22	3	0	1	3	2	2	39
MANISTEE	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
MARQUETTE	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
MASON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MECOSTA	0	0	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
MENOMINEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDLAND	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
MONROE	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
MONTCALM	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
MUSKEGON	0	0	0	8	4	1	0	0		1	0	12
NEWAYGO	0	2	2	10	3	7	1	0	0	6	7	9
OAKLAND	0	1	2	11	5	3	0	1	0	0	2	10
OCEANA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ONTONAGON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSCEOLA	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
OTSEGO/ CRAWFORD/ KALKASKA	1	1	1	9	7	3	0	0	1	3	0	4
OTTAWA	0	0	1	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	8
ROSCOMMON/OGEMAW	0	16	25	7	12	10	0	0	14	12	1	29
SAGINAW	0	1	0	6	7	0	1	0	1	1	0	7
ST. CLAIR	0	0	1	7	1	3	1	0	3	0	0	7

County		Multiple Grievances		Grievance Type Category						Grievance Results		
	Number Pending 12/31	Dupl.	Same Party New Grievance	Empl.	Supp.	Par. Time	Cust.	Gend. Based	Other	Chg. Policy /Ops.	Pers. Action	No Action
ST. JOSEPH	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
SANILAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SCHOOLCRAFT	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SHIAWASSEE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUSCOLA	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
VANBUREN	1	0	0	7	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
WASHTENAW	0	1	3	18	11	4	3	0	3	0	2	21
WAYNE	2	10	8	18	60	6	0	2	33	0	0	0
WEXFORD/ MISSAUKEE	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	18	52	74	285	343	101	15	11	168	34	30	466

* FTR stands for failed to report.

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2005 Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement

2005 Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement

State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB)

This report summarizes the current status of the friend of the court citizen advisory committees (CAC). A history of the CACs can be found in the State Court Administrative Office's 2004 Annual Grievance Report to the Legislature, available at:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/focb/grievrpt2004.pdf>

Evaluative Summary

As explained in the main report's Executive Summary, the FOCB was created within SCAO by the Friend of the Court Act, enacted in 1982. Later, the 1996 legislation that created the CACs also expanded SCAO/FOCB's duties by requiring that it submit to the Michigan Legislature an annual evaluative summary of the activities of each CAC, the aggregate activities of all CACs, and any problems that impede CACs' ability to satisfy the users of CAC services (MCL 552.519[D][iii]).

This CAC summary is divided into five sections. For each active CAC, this report details: (1) the number of meetings and reports submitted to its county board and current court(s); (2) investigation of grievances; (3) other services provided; (4) problems encountered by the CAC; and (5) summary and conclusions.

The SCAO/FOCB mailed out the annual reporting forms to each county and all existing CACs on January 30, 2006. The majority of counties either never formed a committee or allowed their committee to become inactive. The following bulleted list shows the current status of CACs in Michigan. The data came from written reports, correspondence, and other contacts with the counties.

Counties that have formed a CAC:

- 30 counties formed CACs since 1997, but 25 of those were not active in 2005 or failed to submit a 2005 report.
- 5 CACs reported 2005 activities to the SCAO/FOCB.

As noted above, most counties never established a CAC. In the 30 counties that did establish CAC, most of those CACs no longer are active. Written comments provided by the counties with currently inactive committees indicate that there were four reasons for the inactivity: 1) lack of funding, 2) SCAO not providing onsite support, 3) inability to fill committee positions, and 4) lack of business.

Only CACs in Kent, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, and Oceana filed 2005 reports. The following information is drawn from these reports.

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A. MCL 552.504a(1) provides that a CAC must meet a minimum of six times each year and submit its meeting minutes to the county board.

Number of times each CAC met and how it reported to its county board:

- Kent County CAC met six times (bi-monthly) and submitted to the county board its minutes after each meeting.
- Livingston County CAC met “less than six” times and submitted to the county board an annual report and all of its meeting minutes.
- Macomb County CAC met “less than six” times (as needed), submitted its minutes after each meeting, and submitted an annual report to the county board at the end of the year.
- Oakland County CAC met 11 times and submitted an annual report to SCAO and the county board.
- Oceana County CAC met “less than six” times. Minutes of the meetings were submitted to the county board after each meeting. A CAC representative appeared once at a county board meeting.

B. MCL 552.526(3) provides that a party to a domestic relations matter who has a grievance concerning friend of the court office operations may file the grievance with the county CAC at any time during the proceedings. MCL 552.526(4) provides that the CAC shall establish a procedure for randomly selecting grievances submitted directly to the office of the friend of the court. The citizen advisory committee shall review the response of the office to these grievances and report its findings to the court and the county board, either immediately or in the committee's annual report.

1. Number of grievances directly submitted to CACs:

- Kent County One grievance was submitted to the CAC. The grievance addressed one custody issue and one child support issue. The grievance was rejected because MCL 552.526 does not authorize grievances on these issues.
- Livingston County CAC received no grievances.
- Macomb County had four grievances file with the CAC. Those grievances addressed four support issues and two issues considered “other.” All of the grievances were rejected (two were not related to FOC “office operations,” one was considered “other,” and the committee was unable to contact the fourth grievant).
- Oakland County CAC did not indicate how many grievances it received.
- Oceana County CAC did not receive any grievances.

In summary for 2005, there were five grievances filed with the CACs. Those five grievances addressed five child support issues, one custody issue, and two issues considered “other.”

2005 Friend of the Court Citizen Advisory Committee Supplement

2. Number of grievances filed initially with the friend of the court, and later randomly selected for review by CAC.
 - Kent County CAC randomly selected nine grievances; of those, seven included support issues, one included a parenting time issue, and two included issues considered “other.” The CAC fully agreed with the friend of the court’s responses to eight grievances. The other grievance response was being evaluated at the time the report was submitted.
 - Livingston County CAC randomly selected six grievances. Among those selected, four contained support issues, one contained a parenting time issue, one contained a custody issue, and one contained an issue considered “other.” The CAC fully agreed with the friend of the court’s response once, and partially agreed twice. Two other responses were still being reviewed at the time the report was submitted, and one response was not reviewed because it was not related to FOC office operations or any other issue recognized as grievable by MCL 552.526.
 - Macomb County CAC randomly selected 10 grievances in which 23 issues were raised. They included seven support issues, seven gender-based issues, four parenting time issues, two custody issues, and three issues considered “other.” The CAC fully agreed with the friend of the court’s responses to all 10 grievances.
 - Oakland County CAC selected and reviewed 25 grievances but did not provide any additional information.
 - Oceana County CAC did not report any information about grievances randomly selected and reviewed.

In summary, four CACs randomly selected and reviewed 50 grievances that were initially filed with their local friend of the court. Oakland’s CAC did not provide any additional information about the 25 grievances that it reviewed. The other 25 grievances were reviewed by the 3 other CACs. Within those grievances were 18 support issues, 6 parenting time issues, 3 custody issues, and 6 issues considered “other.” The CACs fully agreed with the FOC’s response 19 times, and partially agreed two times. Three grievances were still being reviewed when the CAC reports were submitted, and one grievance was not reviewed because the issue it raised was not grievable under the CAC statute.

C. Other services provided by CACs.

Two CACs provided additional services in 2005. The Macomb County CAC responded to calls from the public and to Freedom of Information Act requests. The Oceana County CAC distributed informational brochures to the public.

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D. MCL 552.519 (3)(d)(iii) requires “an identification of problems that impede the efficiency of the activities and functioning of the citizen advisory committees and the satisfaction of the users of the committees’ services.”

CACs were asked to identify problems that have impeded their efficiency, activities, and ability to satisfy users. Only Livingston, Macomb, and Oakland CACs provided responses.

- **Livingston:** The Livingston CAC reported: “FOC did not provide copies of any grievances despite ongoing request for such and not having a quorum at each meeting impeded our ability to make recommendations and otherwise function. Existing vacancies on the committee have also impeded the function of the committee. In addition, MCL 552.526 needs amending. Section 3 allows grievances concerning office operations. Section 7 excludes decisions regarding a specific case. Mostly all people who file a grievance are complaining about a specific action, or decision, made in their case. The wording of Section 7 is not realistic in addressing the concerns of the public. The language is too restrictive. If a person believes an office employee is biased but the committee can’t review those decisions because they are not proper subjects for a grievance, the committee is in effect rendered powerless to review much of anything.”
- **Macomb:** The Macomb County CAC cited: “Lack of knowledge of existence of FOC CAC.”
- **Oakland:** “The biggest obstacle facing the Citizen Advisory Committee has been the lack of protocol provided to the committee. This resulted in some communication and other errors in 2005.”

E. Summary and Conclusions

On January 30, 2006, the FOCB sent CAC reporting forms and an explanatory cover memo to all chairpersons of known citizen advisory committees, all chairpersons of county boards of commissioners, and all county executives. The memo requested that the county report on its CAC activities, or have someone contact SCAO to report whether a CAC was ever formed. The majority of the counties responded that their CACs are not active or were never formed. Only five counties provided CAC annual reports.

There were fewer active CACs in 2005 than 2004. This probably is because 2005 PA 210 made county CACs optional, rather than mandatory.

Based on the reports submitted to the SCAO, two CACs (Kent and Oakland) indicated they meet six or more times per year as required by the statute. Two CACs (Kent and Macomb) had a total of five grievances filed directly with them. Four CACs (Kent, Livingston,

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Macomb, and Oakland) reviewed 50 randomly selected grievances that had been filed with their friend of the court offices.

In comparison to 2004:

- Three fewer CACs filed reports in 2005 (five, versus eight in 2004).
- There were fewer grievances filed directly with the CACs in 2005 (five, versus eleven in 2004).
- Fewer grievances that were filed with the friend of the court were subsequently reviewed by CACs (50, versus 81 in 2004).

The State Court Administrative Office will continue to provide assistance to friends of the court regarding CAC duties and responsibilities.